

Research Context:

As our world becomes increasingly "VUCA" - i.e. volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous - organizations increasingly have structures, systems or practices that can be perceived as contradictory, yet interrelated. Managing and leading through the resulting paradoxical tensions has been described as the "ultimate advantage and challenge for organizations" (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009: 709). While previous research offers numerous management approaches that enable the successful management of paradoxical tensions within and between organizations, recent research emphasizes paradoxical leadership (PL) - the integration of seemingly contradictory but interrelated leadership behaviors (e.g., maintaining distance and closeness) - as an important prerequisite for successfully leading individuals, teams, or even entire organizations through paradoxical tensions. To deal with such paradoxical tensions, leaders and organizational members need the ability to think paradoxically (paradoxical frame - PF) on the one hand, and the corresponding ability to act depending on embedded contextual factors and situation-specific characteristics to shape their responses to these tensions.


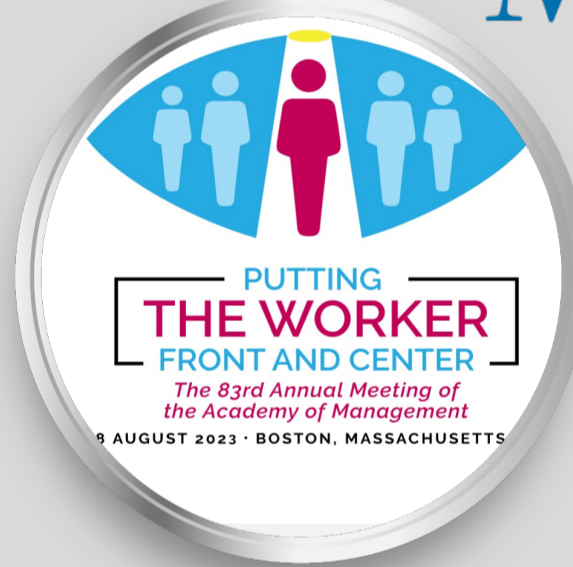


General Research Problem:



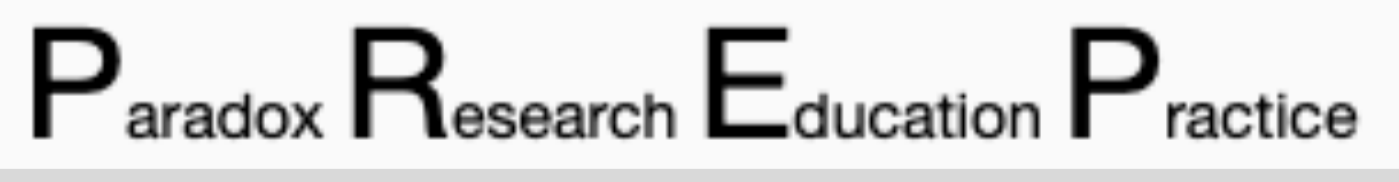
Most research has shown that the ability of leaders and organizational members to think paradoxically (PF) is a prerequisite for successful leadership and management through paradoxical tensions. Despite these advances, current research on PFs and PL is still relatively fragmented and fails to explain the full complexity of leading and managing through paradoxes, especially considering that multinational organizations are embedded in different environments and thus in different contexts. This project applies a more holistic view on the **mechanisms of how paradoxical tensions are situationally perceived and managed by individuals and collectives in different contexts, and how such mechanisms become prevalent based on situational characteristics and influence the adoption of individual and collective PFs.** The results not only contribute to our theoretical understanding of these phenomena, but also provide concrete practical advice on how organizations and their leaders can better deal with the complexity and paradoxical tensions in organizational life. The project was pursued in two subprojects:

Projects:

Results:

Conference Submissions and Output:

<p>Paradoxical Leadership: An Integrative Review and Future Research Agenda</p>	<p>The project set out to further develop a systematic literature review on paradoxical leadership (PL) as the current literature was rather fragmented and disconnected.</p>	<p>We distinguish between different types of paradoxical tensions at several levels of analysis and discuss individual- and organizational-level management approaches to cope with these tensions. Based on a developed framework, gaps in the current literature are highlighted and an agenda for future research is presented.</p>	   
--	---	--	--

<p>Mechanisms Embedded in Culture That Shape Paradoxical Frames: A Situated Dynamics Approach</p>	<p>The aim of the project was to study culturally embedded mechanisms that are activated by situation-specific characteristics and influence the adoption of individual and collective PFs when shaping responses to paradoxical tensions.</p>	<p>The developed integrative model introduces values as traits inherent to individuals' PFs, and schemas and norms as contextual mechanisms embedded in culture. Situation-specific factors dynamically serve as activators of such culturally embedded mechanisms, which, in turn, influence if and how individuals and collectives adopt a PF to shape responses to paradoxical tensions.</p>	  
--	--	---	---

Summarizing, the project has resulted in significant scientific contributions, including one publication in the conference proceedings of a leading international peer-reviewed conference and two submissions to a highly reputable peer-reviewed conference. Furthermore, it has provided the scientific foundation for one dissertation project.